

DISILLUSIONMENT OF THE DOCTOR

YOU know I love you, Harry, and it is cruel of you to say you don't believe me! No, I won't forgive you, and I won't let you kiss me—not for a very long time. You are not nearly as nice as—as you used to be.

"Will you listen to reason, Dora?"
"No, I won't! That is, I am always reasonable. It is you who are unreasonable, and altogether horrid!"

"And all this because I pressed you to marry me at once, and—"

"And you said I could not love you, or that if I really loved you, I would agree to it."

"So you would."

"That is just the same as saying that I don't love you."

"It doesn't look as if you did, does it?"

"Harry," said the girl earnestly, "I am going to be reasonable, as you say you are. I have said I loved you, and we will be friends."

"Gives us leave, indeed!"

"For the very good reason that we can't afford to get married without help from her."

"I don't see that at all," cried the young man. "My practice is not large yet, but every day my father's old patients are coming back to me, and leaving that odious end, Maloney—"

"I'd like to know who you call an odious end, young man?" broke in a sharp, thin voice, and a tall lady, wearing a "front," a set of false teeth and a space-razor came suddenly round the corner of the laurel hedge.

Young Harry Lawrence stood speechless, for he knew that Miss Matilda Prendergast professed a great esteem (and possibly cherished a yet warmer feeling) for the plausible, red-haired Irishman, who had stolen away his father's patients while professing to keep the practice together for him while he finished his course at Guy's.

That evening, Mr. Denyer, the solicitor, sat in his dining room, celebrating his recovery from a fit of gout, which he owed—the recovery, not the gout—to the skillful prescriptions of Michael Maloney, M. R. C. S., and other initials, who now sat opposite to him.

"A doctor should be a married man, I feel that," said Dr. Maloney, with a sentimental air. "The ladies don't altogether like an unmarried man. And there's only one objection to Miss Prendergast, and that is that I can't find out anything definite about her position."

"The aunt, do you mean, or the niece?"

"Oh, the aunt, to be sure. I'm aware the money belongs to her. She's as much as said so in my hearing many a time."

"Humph!"

"But I'd think it safer, as a prudent man, to have a few particulars. I'd like to know, for one thing, whether the money belongs to her, to do as she likes with, or whether she has only a life interest in it."

Lawyer Denyer was occasionally as deaf as a post. He chose to be deaf now.

"You and I have done one another many a good turn," said the doctor, edging his chair a little nearer, "and I hope we shall live to do each other many more. Now, I should be eternally obliged if you would tell me in strict confidence—mind, in the very strictest confidence—how much Miss Prendergast possesses in her own right with absolute control."

"Are you aware, Dr. Maloney," said the lawyer, speaking very slowly, "that you are insulting me in a very gross manner? The late Stephen Prendergast was my client, sir, and you calmly propose that I should make his affairs known to you, a perfect stranger! And you have the audacity to do this—"

"Hang you, sir!" roared the hot-headed Irishman, flinging out of the house.

At his next attack, which happened not long after, Mr. Denyer, of course, called in another medical man, but whether it was that Dr. Maloney knew the patient's constitution and habits better, or that he was in possession of a drug of singular efficacy, the fact remained that the lawyer did not receive anything like the same relief from the new doctor's remedies as he had been accustomed to obtain from those supplied by the Irishman.

The lawyer had fully made up his mind that under no circumstances would he ever speak to Dr. Maloney again; but pain is a wonderful stimulant, and in one of his worst paroxysms he sent a message to him, begging him to come and do what he could to relieve him.

Dr. Maloney promptly attended the summons, but on entering the sick room he advanced to the bedside and said with a frown:

"When I was here last, Mr. Denyer, you all but kicked me out of the house."

"Man, how can you remember such things at a time like this? I withdraw all I said. But I am in torment, I tell you! Will you give me some of that medicine I had from you last time?"

"I have no doubt I shall be able to give you relief, at all events," said the doctor smoothly, "and I suppose I may take it that you will oblige me in that little matter I spoke of?"

The lawyer glared at him for a moment or two in silence, then pointing to a long blue envelope that lay on a table nearby, he said: "Open that. Perhaps you may gather from what you find inside anything you wish to know."

The envelope was addressed to Mr. Denyer, and without hesitation the doctor opened it. It contained a note from Miss Prendergast, inclosing her will. It was not signed—she wished some minor alterations to be made in it. But it was the will itself that interested him.

He hastily ran his eye over it, and found that to his surprise Miss Prendergast was leaving nearly all her money to medical charities, and Dorothy was to receive an annuity of a hundred and twenty pounds a year.

"The will's not signed," the doctor muttered to himself, "and if it was a new will can be made any day. For that matter, the day she is married it is so much waste paper."

He quietly replaced the will and letter in the envelope, and turned to his patient. The medicines he sent in were as effectual as they had always proved, and in less than a week Lawyer Denyer, as the country people called him, was as well as ever.

Some months passed and not a week went by without Harry Lawrence pressing his sweetheart to throw prudence to the winds and marry him out of hand.

During that period, also, the attentions paid to the aunt by his professional rival became rather marked, but everybody thought the idea of a match between them too ridiculous to be worthy of serious consideration.

Harry at last became so importunate that Dolly yielded; only she stipulated that, as she could not hope to obtain her aunt's consent, the marriage must be as private as circumstances would permit. To this, of course, the young man readily assented.

It was a quarter to eight on a cold winter's morning when Dolly slipped out of her room and paused at the door of her aunt's bedroom, with the intention of slipping in and bidding her a silent adieu.

To her surprise the room was empty. Yet the bed had been slept in, and there was nothing that suggested that anything unusual or disastrous had occurred. Dolly would have stayed to investigate, but she heard the impatient footsteps of her lover on the gravel outside, and she hastened to join him.

"Oh, she will be all right," said Harry. "We'll see about her afterward. I hope to goodness, though, she hasn't gone to the church to try to stop our wedding."

On the way they met no one, but the low stone building was lighted up, and in the church porch they met Miss Matilda Prendergast, with Dr. Maloney by her side.

The four stared at one another for some seconds in silence. Then the elder lady, with a pretty shyness, advanced her withered cheek to her niece, saying: "Kiss me, my dear, and wish me joy. We have just been married."

Just then an urgent message arrived from the vicar, who was both cold and hungry, and the junior pair proceeded into the church and walked up to the altar.

In less than a month both couples had returned from their respective honeymoons, and then Lawyer Denyer had the satisfaction of firing a bombshell which had the effect of destroying Dr. Maloney's matrimonial happiness forever.

Miss Prendergast, he said, derived her property from a will of her father made many years before, when she, then a giddy young thing of romantic tendencies, was in danger of making an extremely undesirable match. It provided that his daughter should inherit his property, subject to the provision that if she should at any time marry without the consent of certain trustees the property should go to the children of his brother Stephen, of whom only Dorothy now survived.

As the trustees were all long since dead it had not occurred to the elderly bride that she ran any risk of losing her money by marrying without legal advice. But fresh trustees had been appointed, and their consent, it seemed, was absolutely necessary, if the conditions on which the property was held by Miss Prendergast were to be fulfilled. As matters stood, she had nothing beyond any allowance her niece might be disposed to make to her—Home Monthly.

If a girl is pretty enough, she hardly ever has to pay street car fare.

AFGHANISTAN AND ITS UP-TO-DATE AMIR

Buffer State between Great Britain and Russia has a Ruler who does not disdain the Luxuries of Western Civilization.....

Few parts of the British Empire have caused Great Britain the anxiety she continues to feel about her Indian possessions, says the Philadelphia Ledger. Every movement Russia has made in Central Asia looking toward the concentration of the innumerable States added by force to the Russian Empire has been watched from the Indian frontier by argus-eyed Britons. Both Russia and England have made careful surveys of the frontiers, and each government has built and continues to build strategic railroads along the enormous and difficult boundaries. Russia is known to have long been in possession of several plans for a descent upon India, and the British have for years been evolving quite as many plans intended to checkmate any movement of the kind.

Missions Sent from India.

At the present time the British are engaged in the pleasant task of assuring the northern neighbors of India of

the size of the United Kingdom, and has a population of about 4,000,000, has been an independent State since the middle of the eighteenth century, prior to which time it was part of Persia, while its province of Kabul was in the Mogul Empire. It is walled in by some of the highest mountains in the world, which almost completely surround it, leaving less than half a dozen so-called passes by which the country may be entered. Only half of these are of use for strategic purposes, and even they are so treacherously situated that a large army might be annihilated by a comparatively small force.

The Afghans, all of whom are Mohammedans, are a warlike people, which fact, added to their strong position, renders their independence comparatively safe. England has burned her fingers more than once in dealing with the Afghans, and Russia has not succeeded in winning them over, although she has spent a quarter of a century coaxing.

There are few countries on the globe, not excepting Tibet, which are more inhospitable to foreigners than Afghanistan. Placed by nature as a buffer between two powerful rivals, Afghanistan is a country where everyone is suspected as a spy of either Russia or the British. In Kabul there are no foreigners. The last one was a Mr. Frelscher, a German gunmaker, who was murdered in a mysterious manner a few months ago. A woman

Habibullah Khan is a very busy monarch, and, while he loves sport, a weakness which endears him to the British, he never permits his private



AN AFGHAN TYPE.

pleasures to interfere with public business, a virtue which he might impress upon his more civilized friends. He takes a commendable pride in his gun factory at Kabul, which daily produces 20,000 cartridges, fifteen rifles and two guns. For nearly two years little work has been done in the factory for lack of material, but apart from this enforced stoppage the factory has been in constant operation since 1886.

It is the Amir's custom on Naw Ruz—the Mussulman's new year—to examine all the guns, rifles and appointments turned out of the workshops during the year. The guns, etc., are laid out for inspection at Shahara, a summer palace, which lies about a mile from the city.

Likes Hawking and Cricket.

Among the sports held in high favor by the Amir are hawking and cricket. He usually has his falcons with him when out shooting, to fly at wounded birds; but on some days he will mount horse and go away to the neighboring hills. He seems insensible to fatigue on these occasions, but his suite usually returns with him in the evening, hanging limply in the saddle.

The Amir two years ago divorced all his wives but four, and ordered that his subjects content themselves with a like number. One of these four wives is of royal birth and lives in a separate house. She is said to be an ambitious woman, who wears English dresses, although a woman who saw them declares they are of styles fashionable thirty years ago.

The Postal Union.

The first step toward the formation of the postal union, which has had such wide results, came from Germany in the shape of a proposal for an international postal congress. This met at Berne in 1873, when twenty-two countries joined the union, including the whole of Europe. A second congress met in Paris in 1878, when ten other countries came in, and the official title, "International Postal Union," was definitely fixed. Its sphere was further enlarged at congresses at Lisbon in 1885 and at Vienna in 1891.

We hear a great deal about women being fond of their church; yet in nine cases out of ten, when a woman gets married, she will give up her church if her man demands it.



BUFFER STATE BETWEEN RUSSIA AND BRITAIN.

their friendship, with the object of forestalling any similar device upon the part of Russia. Old treaties, long since in abeyance or quite inactive, have been renewed, and new ones signed. Last year two missions were sent out from India to carry this object into effect. That commanded by Colonel Younghusband, which invaded Tibet, was ungraciously received, and



THE AMIR OF AFGHANISTAN.

although a treaty was signed in the Forbidden City, Lassa, it is admitted that the success of the enterprise was not unaccompanied by serious inconveniences.

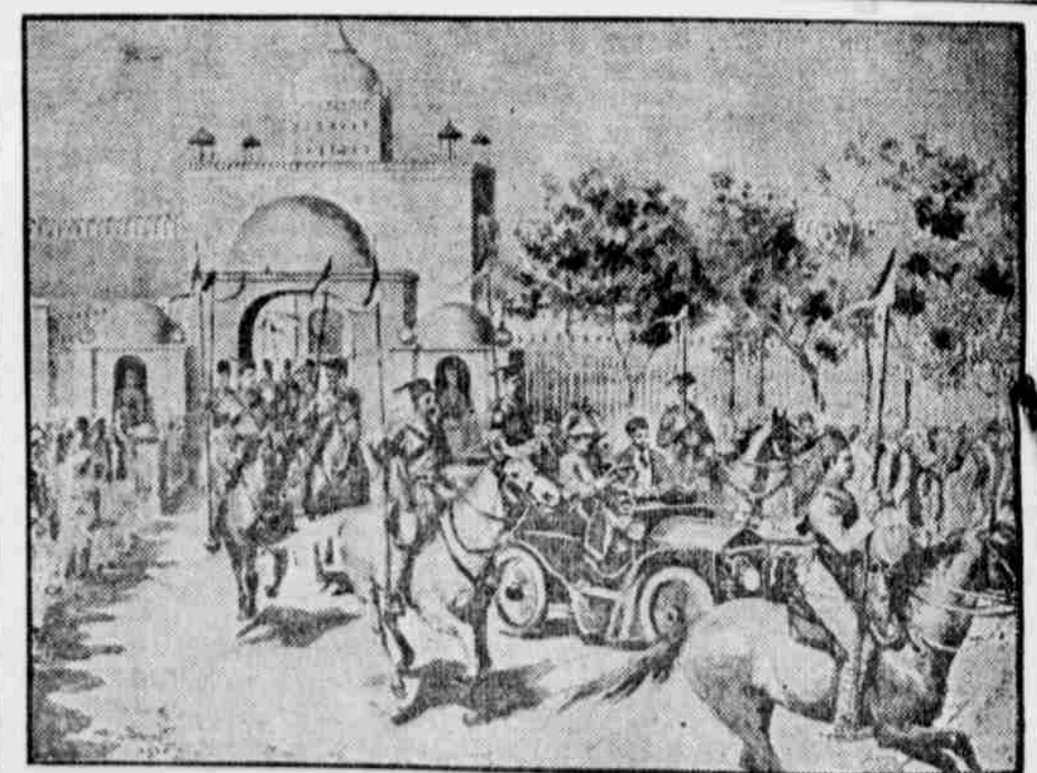
Late in November a British mission was dispatched to Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan, where better luck is believed to have attended it. The mission is headed by Louis Dane, Foreign Secretary for Simla, who is accompanied by H. R. Dobbs, his secretary; Major W. Mallison, R. A.; Captain Victor Brooke, Ninth Lancers, and a British doctor. The necessity for this visit arises from the fact that the agreement made with the late Amir, Abdurrahman, terminated at his death in 1901. Since that time the son and successor of the late Amir, Habibullah, has been proving himself loyal to British interests in the absence of any binding documents. He has repeatedly dispatched assurances to the Viceroy of India of his devotion to the British. Nevertheless, it was considered that his affection would be more convincing if he set his royal hand and seal to it.

Several matters need discussion, and one of them is the question of the British subsidy, to which the Amir is entitled. The present Amir has not drawn the annual subsidy of 180,000 rupees (about \$80,000) since he ascended to his kingly dignity. He had no agreement with the British, and did not need the money, for he is rich, and life in Afghanistan is not expensive. Afghanistan, which is about twice

the size of the United Kingdom, and has a population of about 4,000,000, has been an independent State since the middle of the eighteenth century, prior to which time it was part of Persia, while its province of Kabul was in the Mogul Empire. It is walled in by some of the highest mountains in the world, which almost completely surround it, leaving less than half a dozen so-called passes by which the country may be entered. Only half of these are of use for strategic purposes, and even they are so treacherously situated that a large army might be annihilated by a comparatively small force.

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THE AMIR ON HIS MOTOR-CAR LEAVING THE ARAK PALACE.